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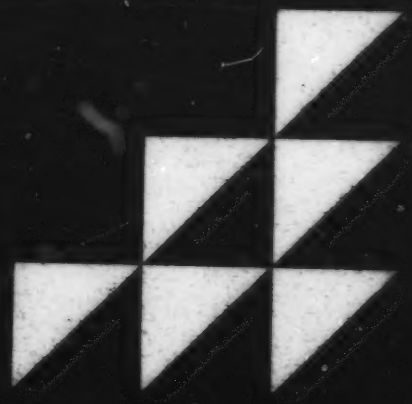
Indian Attachment to the Labour Force



Canada

INDIAN ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper conducts a critical review of the literature on attachment to the labour force and relates the literature to registered Indian people living on-reserve. The focus is on identifying strategies of participation in the wage labour market and the factors which determine the different levels and types of that participation.

One set of labour market theories focuses on the characteristics of individuals, such as education, attitude, gender, welfare dependency, and the need for achievement. Much of the policy-related literature on Indian economic development seems to subscribe to these theories. As a result, large investments are made in education and vocational training to facilitate the adaptation of individual Indian people to the labour market. Interestingly, several studies challenge the common view that Indian attitudes and values are not compatible with employment. Some studies suggest that the work aspirations of Indian people are very similar to those held by non-Indians.

Another set of theories argues that there are two labour markets: a primary labour market (high wages, stable employment) and a separate, secondary labour market (low wages, unstable employment). According to these theories, the nature of an individual's attachment to the labour force is determined by the structure of the labour market to which the individual belongs, rather than by the characteristics of the individual. One factor which allocates persons to the secondary labour market is discrimination. Empirical evidence suggests that discrimination against Indian people blocks their access to the primary labour market.

Models which focus on individual characteristics or on the general structure of labour market institutions may not adequately explain attachment patterns because for many status Indians, the reserve appears to represent the main pool of labour force opportunities. The nature of the reserve economy affects employment rates, occupations, and income levels.

There are only a few case studies which provide details about the patterns of attachment among Indians. Examples of attachment strategies employed by Indian people are listed in Table 2 on page 16, including commercial agriculture on-reserve, high paying seasonal employment combined with hunting and fishing, and year-round employment off-reserve. The examples suggest that the overall patterns are both varied and complex, and require considerable additional research.

Studies have linked a variety of individual characteristics with different wage work patterns. Regarding age, the highest rates of unemployment are found in the 15-24 year age cohort. Looking at the family, many Indian women consider mothering to be a full-time occupation and express fears that full-time wage work will prevent them from properly performing their mothering role. Education is also important; Indians with higher levels of education have a better chance at finding employment and are more likely to be

paid more. Also, many reserve residents are reluctant to leave their home communities to look for employment elsewhere because of the loss of community networks and the prejudice they face off-reserve. Individual characteristics associated with wage work patterns are listed in Table 4 on page 18.

Finally, the attachment of Indian people to the labour force must be examined in the context of the reserve economy and opportunities in the local area. The nature of the reserve economy has a major impact on the structure of the reserve labour force and the kinds of skills that are valued. In turn, the number and type of employment opportunities for individuals living on-reserve are affected by the local economy.

PREFACE

Over the past 15 years, a common theme to various studies commissioned by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) has been the differences in the labour force and employment conditions of on-reserve Indians compared to other Canadians and indeed, off-reserve Indians. In Indian Conditions: A Survey, participation in the wage economy in 1976 was 40 percent for Indians compared to the national level of 60 percent and Indian unemployment was estimated to be 18 percent compared to 8 percent for the national labour force (Canada, 1980: 58-59). Using the 1981 Census, Nicholson and MacMillan (1986: 52) found only 38 percent of the Indian population employed compared to 60 percent of the Canadian population. Nicholson and MacMillan (1986: 52-53) also found the off-reserve Indians had a substantially higher employment rate (47 percent) compared to on-reserve Indians (32 percent) and that for on-reserve Indians 29 percent had never worked compared to 16 percent of Indians off-reserve and only 10 percent of other Canadians.

Census data for 1986 show that employment rates for Indians remain low (31.4 percent) compared to those for all Canadians (59.6 percent). Twenty-eight percent of Indians on reserves were employed compared to 36.8 percent of Indians living off reserves, and 23.6 percent of Indians on reserves had never worked compared to 17.0 percent of Indians living off reserves (Canada, 1989).

In Part One, the focus is on labour market theories and their application to the labour force participation of Indians on reserves. Labour market theories are organized around four approaches: theories which focus on individual attributes or characteristics; theories which emphasize the structure of labour market institutions; dependency theory; and Marxist theory. A general description is given of each approach, then applications to the case of Indians on reserves are reviewed.

In Part Two, variables relevant to Indian labour force attachment are reviewed in three sections. In the first section, the general literature on labour markets and the literature on Indian labour force activities is used to identify variables which measure different kinds of Indian participation in the labour force. In the second section, individual characteristics which affect Indian wage work patterns are identified and in the third section, the nature of reserves and local economies are discussed as critical aspects to explore in taking account of Indian participation in the labour force.

This report was written under contract with the Quantitative Analysis and Socio-Demographic Research Section of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Its purpose was to conduct a critical review of the literature and assemble a bibliography concerning levels of attachment to the labour force pertaining to Canadian Indians living on reserves. "Attachment to the labour force" was broadly defined to encompass the role that wage work plays in the strategies Indians on reserves use to support themselves. The review was to include general models on the nature of labour

markets as well as work on Indian participation in the labour force. A second objective was to use the results of the literature review to identify types of attachment to the labour force and describe the characteristics of individuals associated with each type of attachment. This typology could provide useful information for and contribute to the Department's efforts in social and economic development of Indian reserves.

As the literature review progressed it became clear that there were serious gaps in our knowledge about how Indians "make ends meet" and the role that wage labour plays in their work patterns. As a result, the research focused on approaches to and issues in developing, rather than modelling and testing, a typology of labour force attachment for Indians on reserves.

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PART ONE

LABOUR MARKET THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATION TO THE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF INDIANS ON RESERVES

1.0 Introduction

This part of the report examines four general approaches to explaining how individuals participate and perform in the labour market and evaluates their applicability to Indians on reserves in Canada. The approaches are: theories which focus on individual attributes or characteristics; theories which emphasize the structure of labour market institutions (dual economy or segmentation theory); dependency theory; and Marxist theory. The approaches are not mutually exclusive. A full explanation of Indian wage work patterns, for example, would have to draw on models of how individual characteristics affect labour force participation as well as on models of institutional constraints and biases. In the interests of clarity, however, the approaches are presented separately.

Clearly, the positions put forward by different schools of thought are considerably more complex than what is presented here. Therefore, the objective of this part of the report is to present different basic viewpoints rather than detailed summaries. Detailed critiques of the various schools of thought are also beyond the scope of this report. Instead, the focus is on the insights the different schools of thought offer for, and their applicability to, economic development on Indian reserves.

There is a considerable literature dealing with Indian reserve economies. Much of it does not explicitly acknowledge general debates or theories concerning the nature of the labour market; other work appears to draw on several schools of thought in combination. The following paragraphs identify themes which reflect different perspectives on the nature of the labour market.

1.1 Theories Focusing on Individual Characteristics

General Models

There are a number of theories which focus primarily on the characteristics of individuals for explanations of how they fare in the labour market. The basic thrust of policies and programs arising from these approaches is to change individuals' attributes to get them into the general work force, and to improve their chances in the labour market. The most well-known are: economic theories including orthodox and human capital theories; sociological studies on status attainment; and culture of poverty and modernization theories. Table 1 lists individual characteristics the various approaches associate with performance in the labour market.

Table 1: Individual Characteristics Associated With Labour Market Performance: Four Approaches

Economic Theories	**Culture of Poverty Theory**
Innate Ability	Community Disorganization
Formal Education	Family Disintegration
Vocational Training	Welfare Dependency
On-the-Job Training	Personal Disorganization
On-the-Job Experience	Rejection of Middle-Class Values
Sociological Studies	**Modernization Theory**
Father's Occupation	Low Need for Achievement
Father's Education	Low Tolerance for Risk-Taking Behaviour
Ethnicity/Race	Family and Community Responsibilities Inhibit First Job
Age	
Sex	
Initiative, Attitudes, & Values	

Economic theory of both the orthodox and human capital varieties is based on a model of human behavior in which people come to the labour market with a set of productive characteristics and individual preferences, and on this basis, make rational decisions regarding investments that will improve their earning power and the choice of jobs, in order to maximize their lifetime earnings. Employers, on the other hand, pay people in accordance with their productive value. Thurow (1969: 26) puts it simply: "If an individual's income is too low, his [sic] productivity is too low. His income can be increased only if his productivity can be raised." Economists seem to agree on several principal sources of labour productivity: innate ability; formal education; vocational education; on-the-job training and on-the-job experience.

These economic theories have at their core simplicity and universality which leads to a presumption that employers use similar criteria to rank workers across industries, that workers' objectives and motivations are homogeneous across populations and history, and that income generation functions are the same for all groups in the labour force. While distortions (such as discrimination) in the labour market can create distinct sectors in the labour market, orthodox theorists generally view these distortions as temporary and subject to erosion through competition in the long run. The only forces that could cause essentially similar workers to be treated differently would be factors which interfere with competition in the labour market; the most important of which are unions and minimum wage laws (Becker, 1975).

Sociological studies on status attainment and occupational mobility have attempted to provide more detail on the characteristics of individuals who obtain labour market positions with higher social status and income (Blau and Duncan, 1967). Much of the

work in these studies attempts to unravel elements which affect individuals' values, preferences and objectives with respect to occupation and strategy of labour force participation. Relevant factors in sociological research often include the characteristics of individuals' backgrounds as well as those of the individual. Typical explanatory variables include the occupation and education of the respondent's father, the respondent's ethnic or racial background, sex, age, migration patterns, number of years of schooling, first job, and various attitudinal measures.

The culture of poverty thesis is an attempt to explain why successive generations of some groups in society find it impossible to break out of work patterns which create economic marginality. Formulated by anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1968), this thesis maintains that the poor adapt to their marginal position by creating a culture which in turn makes it difficult for individuals to break out of their socio-economic position. This culture is characterized by traits like: non-integration into and hostility towards the major institutions of society; welfare dependency and minimal production of wealth; rejection of middle-class values; low levels of community organization; family disintegration; and individual feelings of fatalism, dependence and inferiority (Lewis, 1966). The culture of poverty is reproduced by successive generations because it gives the poor:

> a culture in the traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings with a design for living, with a ready-made set of solutions for human problems, and so serves a significant adaptive function (Lewis, 1966).

Absorbed by children by the age of six or seven, Lewis maintains that the culture of poverty becomes, in itself, an obstacle that keeps people in a state of poverty and underemployment.

Modernization theory is another set of ideas which has been employed to identify individual attributes which work against employment and economic mobility. Focusing on the problems of less-industrialized countries, modernization theory argues that the characteristics of the traditional sector of the economy represent major obstacles to be overcome if development is to proceed (Rostow, 1960, 1970). Wien (1986: 89) summarizes elements of the traditional sector which modernization theorists believe work against economic development:

> [P]eople in the traditional...sector are characterized by resistance to change,...their child-rearing patterns are inappropriate for producing individuals with a high need for achievement, their social environment stifles the development of entrepreneurs and risk-taking behaviour; and various institutions, such as the family, the educational and the political system, have shortcomings that inhibit developmental initiatives.

Modernization theory views western cultural practices and attitudes as a prerequisite to economic advancement and material well-being. It assumes that, as less developed societies expand and diversify their economies, their populations will increasingly resemble those of more highly industrialized nations.

Application to Indian Economic Development

Much of the policy-related literature appears to subscribe to economic and sociological theories of human capital and status attainment. One of the earliest large-scale studies of Indian economic conditions in Canada, the Hawthorn Report, for example, claimed that:

> a disproportionately large number of able bodied Indians of working age are unemployed or underemployed....To facilitate the transfer of large numbers of these into more skilled or better paid fields of employment having the most favourable prospects of expansion will require an extensive, and intensive, program of education, training and conditioning of Indian workers (Hawthorn, 1966: 102).

As a result, substantial investments have been made in education and vocational training to facilitate individual adaptation to the industrial economy (Canada, 1970; Stevenson, 1968; Wien, 1986: 90). Educational programs have been justified not only as a means of teaching skills, but also of transmitting appropriate attitudes and values (Hirabayashi, 1962). Other strategies have been to educate managers and employers about Indian values and customs and to adapt work conditions to make them more compatible with supposed Indian work characteristics and preferences (Grant, 1983; Stoffle, 1975).

Another approach to Indian economic development embraces themes found in the literature on modernization theory (Mead, 1932; Dozier, Simpson and Milton, 1972). This approach views Indian cultural practices as inimical to economic development and the loss of Indian culture as desirable for and a prerequisite to economic growth. For the most part, this research assumed that prolonged contact between Indian and White culture would inevitably result in the adoption and diffusion of White culture.

To the surprise of researchers, Indians did not disappear, causing one frustrated anthropologist to question:

> our earlier expectations concerning the rate of American Indian acculturation and why full acculturation to White American ways of life is not occurring in the contemporary American scene (Vogt, 1957: 139).

When it became evident that assimilation was not occurring, an explanation developed

which viewed the social and economic conditions on Indian reserves as the result of something which went wrong in the change from traditional to modern conditions (Honigmann, 1965; James, 1972; McGregor, 1946; Zentner, 1972). This approach is similar to Lewis' culture of poverty thesis in identifying a subculture on reserves which works against economic development. While authors vary in identifying the source of this subculture, a common theme is that Indian inability to cope with modern society provoked a socio-cultural constellation which in itself is a resistor to change. Features of reserve society which prevent positive change include:

> child neglect, alcoholism, minor crime, truancy, illegitimacy, divorce, marital and occupational maladjustments [in comparison to] ecologically similar non-Indian communities adjacent to it (Zentner, 1972: 215).

There are a number of problems with arguments that Indian attitudes and values are not compatible with employment in the industrial labour force. Some studies challenge assertions that Indian's attitudes and motives vary from those of the larger society. Smith's (1975) survey of attitudes of native students in the Mackenzie Delta and their "Outsider" counterparts found that attitudes and preferences were very similar. With respect to evaluations of prestige occupations and preferred places to live and work, his data (1971: 113) showed that:

> Native students differ little from their Outsider counterparts. They esteem professional and skilled jobs, urban-type working conditions, and reject the seasonal, unskilled, rural and outdoor sorts of occupations with which native people have so consistently been identified with in the past.

Reasons for choosing particular occupations were also similar between the two groups (Smith, 1975: 115).

Lampe's (1974) research emphasized the inaccuracy of non-Indian's expectations about Indian job preferences. His survey of Yukon Indian males between 22 and 66 years of age attempted to identify what job characteristics were important to them. He also asked local employment experts about Indians' job preferences. Indian respondents indicated that wage level, permanence and closeness to home were the most important considerations. In contrast, employment experts did not expect that Indians would consider wage levels or job permanence of primary importance, emphasizing instead ability to work with peers and to work outdoors.

The degree to which cultural factors are incompatible with economic development in the first place is not clear. Deprez and Sigurdon's (1969) study of Indian workers in five non-traditional enterprises rejected the hypothesis that traditional Indian values and culture were impediments to Indians' work performance (See also Freilich, 1958). Cornell

and Kalt's (1990: 101-102) study suggested that the preservation of tribal political and social organization could facilitate economic development on reserves. Lockhart's (1989) work demonstrates that native cultural values can be adapted to the creation and structuring of computer communications networks. Many aboriginal hunting economies have shown considerable flexibility and adaptiveness in preserving integral elements of their ways of life while accommodating the demands of modern western society (e.g., Kayahna Area Tribal Council, 1985). The strategies employed by the Quebec Cree in attempting to preserve their hunting economies are a case in point (Feit, 1980; LaRusic, 1979). In recent years, Indian people and others have argued that non-Indians have a good deal to learn from Indian societies and economies (Loubser, 1980). Finally, Knight's (1978) description of the substantial participation of British Columbia Indians in a wide variety of resource extraction industries between 1858 and 1930 forces a re-examination of the assumption that Indians have inappropriate work habits because of their cultural unpreparedness for the industrial labour force.

While an analysis which presents Indian culture as inimical to economic development must be questioned, cultural attributes may affect the kinds of jobs individuals take (Freilich, 1958; Hedican, 1986) and the way in which work groups are organized (Van Horn, 1983; Usher, 1971). In addition, some Indian communities insist that economic development must not destroy the social fabric of the community and must be compatible with cultural values (Cornell and Kalt, 1990; Loubser, 1980). As a result, some kinds of economic development may be rejected. In other words, it appears that Indian cultural values may affect types rather than levels of economic development.

In the context of economic development, the efficacy of programs which focus on education and training must also be questioned. While there has been no systematic attempt to determine the total amount of public sector resources devoted to these kinds of programs, it is clear that they have largely been a failure in terms of achieving any substantial change in economic conditions. Labour market participation rates of aboriginal people are far below the national average, unemployment is chronically high, and remuneration from wage labour is individually and collectively far below that for any other definable group in Canada (Hagey et al., 1989c; McArthur, 1989; Nicholson and Macmillan, 1986; Lithwick et al., 1986).

Work which identifies the emergence of dysfunctional subcultures on reserves as the major barrier to economic development has been criticized from several perspectives. Elias (1975) and Lithman (1984) have noted the ethnocentrism of measures of disorganization, their vagueness and their descriptive rather than analytic character. Based on detailed and historic studies, some researchers have concluded that state policies are mainly to blame for dependency and community problems, rather than Indians' inability to adjust to industrial society (Driben and Trudeau, 1983; Dunning, 1964; Shkilnyk, 1985).

1.2 Dual Economy Perspectives

General Models

The dual economy perspective or segmentation theory emerged from empirical work during the American war on poverty experienced in the late 1960s. While there have been a number of variants of the dualism hypothesis (e.g., Bluestone, 1970; Vietorisz and Harrison, 1973), this summary focuses on the Doeringer and Piore (1971) model which deals primarily with dual labour markets (see also Gordon, et al., 1982). Segmentation theorists do not concentrate, as the human capital theorists do, on explanations of outcomes based on the differing productive capacities and preferences of individuals. Rather, they concentrate on employment itself, and factors within the structure of employment which give rise to observed differences in outcome.

According to this theory, a variety of historical forces have interacted to create separate segments in the labour market. Large, capital intensive firms with long production runs value on-the-job experience, and have the high and stable profits which allow them to invest in work conditions which will attract a stable labour force. The costliness of such employment conditions means that they are not provided where stability is not seen as necessary. Firms which are small, with low capital intensities, lower profit margins and fluctuating need for labour provide the basis for the secondary labour market.

As a result, there are two separate labour markets in which workers and employers operate by very different behaviourial rules. Primary labour markets are characterized by high wages, stable employment, a greater degree of on-the-job training investment by employers, good working conditions and opportunities for career advancement. Secondary labour markets are characterized by the opposite: less job security, low skill requirements, low wages, little change for advancement, little on-the-job training, poor working conditions and unstable employment. The structure of the labour market rather than the attributes of individuals affects job characteristics.

Individuals are allocated to the secondary labour market through several mechanisms. Doeringer and Piore (1971) identify two kinds of discrimination. There is "simple" discrimination where employers for "primary" jobs avoid employing workers with certain characteristics which they perceive will dispose workers to unreliability and instability. There is also "statistical" discrimination where employers avoid hiring certain groups because their superficial characteristics seem to be statistically associated with undesirable behaviourial traits (Spence, 1973).

There is little mobility between markets for several reasons. First, discrimination by employers creates barriers to entry to the primary labour market for some workers. Second, access to the primary labour market is limited mainly to "entry-level" jobs since much of the hiring within the primary labour market is from among workers already working in those companies. Third, the process of working in secondary jobs and living

with others whose life styles are organized around secondary employment reinforces behaviourial traits associated with employment in that sector. As a result, previous experience in the secondary labour market is more likely to be a handicap than an asset in obtaining a job in the primary labour market.

Application to Indian Economic Development

There are few examples of the systematic application of the dual economy perspective to the experience of Indian people in the labour market (see Clatworthy, 1981a; Hull, 1984; Stabler, 1989). Since the secondary jobs described in the dual economy theory correspond to the jobs which Indians have been most likely to obtain, the theory has importance for a consideration of Indian labour market participation. Wien (1986) argues that segmentation theory offers some refreshing departures from orthodox models because it focuses on the differing experience of groups in the labour market, rather than on the presumed motivations of the "average" worker.

Stabler's (1989) analysis of labour markets in the Northwest Territories suggested that there was discrimination against native people in access to primary employment and in advancement once they were employed. He found that natives held a smaller proportion of jobs in the primary market than non-natives for all age-sex-education categories except those with university education. Although the proportion of both natives and non-natives holding primary jobs increased with experience, the rate of increase appeared to be less for native employees in some sectors. Education, however, lessened the degree of segmentation for native people, and native university graduates were more likely than non-native university graduates to hold jobs in the primary labour market.

In his analysis of the Micmac labour force in Nova Scotia, Wien (1986: 97-103) found that few Micmac jobs were unionized despite their concentration in industries with high rates of unionization, that the Micmac were over-represented in the marginal sector, spending considerable periods of time not working and relying on social assistance, that vocational training had no apparent impact on subsequent employment, and that unemployed or irregular workers had little success in making a transition to regular employment in the time period of the study. Hull's (1984: 14) study of northern Manitoba natives found that natives were more likely to work in insecure, secondary labour market occupations. As a result, they had little opportunity to advance to the better paying, more secure jobs of the primary labour market.

1.3 Dependency Theory

General Models

Dependency theory is an explicit rejection of modernization work which locates the causes of underdevelopment in the deficiencies of the traditional sector and the

unsuitability of the workers it produces. Instead, dependency theorists argue that the roots of underdevelopment are found in the expansion of the capitalist system through colonization. Most frequently associated with André Gunder Frank's (1967) analysis of Brazilian development, dependency theorists maintain that the traditional and the modern sectors do not exist independently of each other (see also Baran, 1957). Instead, it is precisely the exploitative web of political and economic relationships between them which serves to develop the modern sector and underdevelop the traditional sector. The traditional sector becomes increasingly dependent on the modern sector for economic assistance.

While dependency theory has usually been applied to relations between capitalist developed countries and underdeveloped Third World societies, it has also been used to describe relations between regions and locations within nations. When one area is exploited for the benefit of another, the exploited area is deemed an "internal colony". Internal colonies are created when one area dominates another to the extent that it channels the flow of resources from the internal colony or peripheral area to the dominant core area. The economy of an internal colony is often dominated by agricultural or extractive production that provides raw materials to the core area. Frequently, the multinational corporation is regarded as the chief agent of exploitation, extracting raw materials at low cost without reinvesting profits in the peripheral area. In some versions, it is acknowledged that the multinational corporation can be the source of some growth through the provision of employment and the stimulation of the local service economy. However, most capital resources are drained to the core area, and employment opportunities for local residents are frequently low status, few in number and relatively short-term.

Internal colonialism creates a number of distortions in the local economy. First, decisions about development are externally controlled and subject to external priorities rather than meeting local needs and demands. Second, capital never accumulates in the hands of the exploited population because the surplus is appropriated by the multinational corporation. Third, the local population is progressively forced into a particular class structure which serves to perpetuate the advantages which capital enjoys. Stavenhagen's (1974) work on Latin America identifies four significant social groupings: i) a business class which links the local economy to the dominant core; ii) a restricted middle class centred around state employment, developed initially to assist capital in achieving its ends and later to ameliorate some of the effects of this relationship; iii) a small privileged working class; and iv) a large marginalized underclass.

Application to Indian Economic Development

Dependency theory and the concept of an internal colony have been used extensively to describe the situation of Indian reserves in both Canada and the United States (Anders, 1980; Bee and Gingerich, 1977; Carstens, 1971; Davis, 1965; Dunning, 1964; Frideres,

1988; Harding, 1971; Jacobson, 1984; Jorgenson, 1968, 1971; Kellough, 1980; Lurie, 1972; McArthur, 1989; Ortiz, 1980; Smallface Marule, 1978; Watkins, 1977). In many applications to Indian reserves, the state is seen as a more important actor than it is in much of the dependency literature. In some cases, the state's role in supporting the interests of the private sector instead of the Indian people is emphasized. In other cases, the coercive power of the state, and its creation of extensive dependency and lack of initiative on the part of Indian people have been identified as an agent of underdevelopment.

The role of the state on Indian reserves also affects the social groups or classes which form. In the 1960s and early 1970s, researchers noted the importance of Euro-Canada or "outsider" dominance in controlling resources and decision-making on reserves (Dunning, 1959; Kew, 1962; Paine, 1971; Vallee, 1962). With the devolution of administrative responsibilities to bands, social groups have changed, but state policies continue strongly to influence reserve social and economic structure. On most reserves, the business group is relatively insignificant in both numbers and influence. Bands function as major employers and band staff may become an élite since they link the community with external resources (Loxley, 1981: 163).

Reserves with a significant modern sector nearby may also develop a privileged working class segment. The longevity of this sector depends on the permanence of employment, varying from short-term resource extraction operations to permanent nearby towns and cities. The substantial proportion of the Indian population, however, remains characterized by unemployment, underemployment and welfare dependency. Usher (1971: 20) argued that the impact of metropolitan Canada on the structure of northern communities was to create an economic duality.

> Two economies exist side by side. One is characterized by a few, large, single-purpose enterprises which are capital intensive, employ a high level of technology and imported skilled labour, and whose economic and transport links are directly and exclusively with metropolitan Canada. The other economy is characterized by many small scale enterprises, generally at the family level, but which are multi-purposes in the sense that they rely on the exploitation of various resources and opportunities in combination. This system employs local labour, traditional or at least small scale technology, and its links with metropolitan Canada are dependent on intermediary organizations representing metropolitan interests. Particularly significant is that the two economies, despite their geographic proximity, and despite the dependence of each upon the metropolis, are virtually independent of each other.

Some cautionary flags have been raised about the direct applicability of dependency theory to the situation of Indian reserves (Lithman, 1983; Snipp, 1986; Wien, 1986). While reserves may exhibit many of the characteristics of Third World underdevelopment, they are found within wealthy countries which are able to ameliorate some aspects of Indian poverty with transfer payments and various social programs. Prospects for national independence are unlikely for Indian nations, and Manuel and Posluns (1974) suggest that Indians themselves are more likely to identify with other indigenous peoples internationally than with the people of the Third World.

The situation of individual Indian reserves and Indian nations varies widely so that it is difficult to apply one general model. Some reserves and nations lost their resource base through settlement in the nineteenth century, while the contemporary resource extraction activities of multinational corporations is more of an issue for others. Not all groups are large enough to agitate for local economic development and self-sufficiency. There are also considerable differences between reserves in terms of the survival of a traditional sector and the existence of two economies as described by Usher (1971).

Dependency theory is problematic in its emphasis on the private sector in providing and structuring employment opportunities with the state relegated to a secondary role providing support to private capital. This is clearly at odds with the situation on many Indian reserves where a very large proportion of individuals who are employed are working either for bands or Indian organizations funded by the federal government, or in various federally funded make-work projects and initiatives. Driben and Trudeau's (1983: 9-10) study of several bands in Northern Ontario found that by 1975, more than ninety percent of the income received by these bands came from the federal government. They concluded that: "if these make-work, job-training, community-development, and job-creation programs are removed, the band's economy will collapse". Stabler and Howe (1990) describe the importance of federal expenditures in creating employment for native peoples in the Northwest Territories during the mid-1950's. Lithman's (1984) study also notes the essential role of federally funded programs and projects for a Manitoba Indian reserve. Wien (1986: 121) concludes that:

> governmental decisions on funding levels, on the distribution of such funds to welfare programs, make-work projects, and long-term economic development, and on education and training investments will be the most important determinants of the levels of poverty and underemployment among Indians. Future theoretical work will need to make progress in developing a more satisfactory model of state action to complement the analysis of the private sector.

Despite problems of applicability to economic development on Indian reserves, dependency theory continues to have considerable appeal. Wien (1986: 114) indicates that:

> In the Indian community, [dependency theory] represents an approach that is congruent with their view of events since the arrival of the Europeans and one that is consistent with their deeply-felt aspirations for independence....It is also an approach that avoids blaming the victim, although some would suggest that it goes too far in the other direction and overplays the role of Indians as passive and exploited people with little scope for action to determine their own fates.

1.4 Marxist Approaches to Indian Economic Development

Because of the complexity of Marxist approaches to the economy, their general lack of attention to minority groups in the labour force, and to date, the relative paucity of applications to Indian economies, this report does not cover in detail these theories. Moreover, many of the themes which emerge from Marxist approaches have been highlighted in earlier sections.

Loxley (1981) and Bourgeault (1983) describe the history of Indians in Western Canada in terms of different stages, each with its own mode of production and class structure. Loxley describes the class structure of contemporary Northern Manitoba Indian reserves as being comprised mainly of a proletariat that is engaged in seasonal and short-term work. It also includes a group of public sector employees, a small petty bourgeoisie class which owns stores, garages etc., and a large group of permanently unemployed. Loxley views part of the Indian labour force as a "reserve army of labour": a low-wage labour force that is available when needed and that serves to keep down the cost of labour in the regional economy (see also Elias, 1975).

There are, however, serious short-comings in Marxist analyses of Indian reserve economies. First, the most important social divisions on many reserves appear to be between those who are employed on a regular basis by the band or by Indian organizations, and those who are not. There are relatively few private businesses on reserves, and as a result, little opportunity for classes based on ownership of the means of production versus ownership of labour. Second, while strategies emerging from the Marxist perspective include organizing to increase Indians' political power, the contemporary aspirations of Indian people for independence and nationhood make it unlikely that Bourgeault's (1983: 75) recommendation to: "develop relationships between the native and greater working class over the [common] root of their oppression" will be a priority in Indians' attempts to improve their economic conditions.

1.5 Summary

It is clear that individual attributes do affect Indians' chances for successful participation

in the labour market. However, explanations based on culture of poverty and modernization theory have been seriously challenged, and various critiques indicate that the nature of labour market institutions and the structure of the reserve economy also have to be taken into account.

Dual labour market theory seems to be particularly applicable to the situation of Indians working off the reserves. This perspective suggests that any analysis of patterns of Indian participation in the labour market has to take into account what proportion of local jobs fall into primary and secondary labour market segments, as well as what proportion of Indians fall into these segments and what are their characteristics.

Models which focus either on individual characteristics or the nature of institutions in the general labour market may not adequately explain the nature of Indian labour force participation. For many status Indians, the reserve economy appears to represent the main pool of labour force opportunities. To date, the aspirations of many Indians continue to focus on their reserves of origin (Ellis, 1978; Lithman, 1984: 48; McCaskill, 1979; Stanbury, 1975: 40-41). Driben and Trudeau (1983: 46) found, when they asked members of the Fort Hope band in Northern Ontario why they preferred to stay in their villages rather than migrate:

> Th[e] sense of community is extremely important to the band....[A]n overwhelming majority indicated that they would much rather live in the villages than in a city or town. While most had been to the south, they said that their own communities were easier to live in, provided them with a better social life, made them feel secure, and let them make friends more easily and raise children better.

Dependency theory indicates that the relationship with the larger society creates distinct social groupings and economic structures and opportunities. This structure may be quite different from that of the larger society. This suggests that the social and economic structure of the reserves must also be examined in accounting for Indian work strategies. The characteristics of individuals, while they clearly have an effect on work patterns, will be mediated by available reserve opportunities.

PART TWO

VARIABLES RELEVANT TO INDIAN LABOUR FORCE ATTACHMENT

2.0 Introduction

The theory about individual Indians' patterns of wage work is not very well developed. General theories of the labour market do not fit the situation of all Indians, and there are many gaps in the literature on Indian labour force participation. In this situation it is probably more fruitful to examine how research on patterns of attachment to the labour force should be pursued than to attempt to specify detailed models.

Exploring Indian labour force attachment requires attention to three separate components: i) identifying patterns of participation in, or attachment to, the labour force; ii) identifying individual characteristics associated with different patterns of participation or attachment; and iii) identifying the structural context for these different patterns. The first section below employs the general literature on labour markets and the available literature on Indian labour force activities to identify variables which measure different kinds of Indian participation in the labour force. The second section identifies individual characteristics which affect Indian wage work patterns. A third section argues that individual characteristics may have different effects on- and off-reserve and on different reserves and local economies. Therefore the nature of the locale has to be taken into account in exploring patterns of Indian participation in the labour force.

Much of the information in this chapter comes from case studies and various consultants' reports. Representativeness is difficult to ascertain because of small samples and sources which are not well documented. Moreover, there are instances where research results seem contradictory. The relationships identified are therefore necessarily speculative and exploratory.

2.1 Developing Measures of Labour Force Attachment

Some of the characteristics of Indian participation in the wage labour force are relatively well known. In Indian Conditions: A Survey, participation in the wage economy in 1976 was 40 percent for Indians compared to the national level of 60 percent, and unemployment was estimated at 18 percent for Indians compared to 8 percent for the national labour force (Canada, 1980: 58-59). The 1986 Census showed that only 31.4 percent of the registered Indian population was employed compared to 59.6 percent of the total Canadian population. Indians living on reserves were at a particular disadvantage with an employment rate of 28.2 percent compared to a rate of 36.8 percent for Indians living off-reserve. Almost a quarter (23.6 percent) of Indians living on reserves in 1986 had never worked for wages compared to 17.0 percent of Indians living off reserves (Canada, 1989).

Data which provide a more general description of the economic coping strategies of Indians in different situations, and the role that wage labour plays are much harder to come by. Which combinations of, for example, wage labour, subsistence pursuits and informal work are possible and which are frequently found? Are there annual or cyclical variations? How many individuals fall into each type of strategy? Under what circumstances do individuals employ one strategy rather than another, or switch from one to the other? There are a few case studies which provide information about these strategies for particular individuals, times and reserves, but the examples in Table 2 suggest that overall patterns may be varied and complex.

Table 2: Selected Examples of Indian Labour Force Participation Strategies

- Successful,full-time commercial agriculture, "elite" sector on Saskatchewan reserve (Dosman, 1972).
- Seasonal employment in high paying employment such as fire fighting, combined with hunting and fishing off-season (Hedican, 1986).
- Full-time, highly paid permanent employment off-reserve combined with on-reserve residency (Ponting, 1986).
- Full-time band administration position, not permanent because of vulnerability to band politics (Lithman, 1983, 1984).
- Sporadic employment in short-term federal job creation projects (Driben and Trudeau, 1983).
- Sporadic, non-permanent, low-paying jobs in a variety of sectors off the reserve (Dosman, 1972; Lithman, 1983, 1984).
- Never worked, permanent welfare dependency (Dosman, 1972).
- Never worked, full-time subsistence activities (DeLancey, 1985).

An analysis of patterns of Indian attachment to the labour force would probably begin with a number of classic measures such as participation rates, employment and unemployment rates, occupation, whether individuals are working full- or part-time, and so on. However, in the absence of more complete and extensive information about how wage work fits into the work patterns of Indians in a variety of situations, measures such as participation and employment rates represent only a beginning to furthering our understanding. Possible additional variables are listed in Table 3, but the choice of particular measures would be resolved through an exploration of which combinations most clearly differentiate patterns of work and labour force participation among Indians on reserves.

The dual economy thesis suggests that a dynamic element must be introduced because of the instability of employment and the rapid and unpredictable movement between categories of "employed", "unemployed" and "not in the labour market" in the secondary labour market (Gordon, 1972: 7-10). This approach also indicates that employment in the secondary labour market is characterized by low wages, menial work, low skills, poor

worker motivation, discrimination, poor job information, and inadequate job access (Manpower Report, 1967: 74-75). Secondary job characteristics associated with the dual economy thesis may be particularly descriptive of jobs held off the reserve (Clatworthy, 1981a; Hull, 1984).

Finally, research on Indian work patterns indicates that seasonality, participation in the subsistence economy, and instability due to the fact that employment is related to band administration or to short-term government programs, should be flagged. These characteristics may be of particular importance for jobs held on reserves (Driben and Trudeau, 1983; Lithman, 1983, 1984). However, affirmative action and job creation programs may also operate in the off-reserve labour market (Breton and Grant, 1984; Grant, 1983; Stevenson, 1968).

Table 3: Measures of Indian Labour Force Attachment

Standard Measures	Segmentation Theory	Literature on Indian Labour Force Participation
Participation Rates	Work History	Seasonal Cycle
Unemployment Rates	Occupational Mobility	Employment Source*
Months Worked	Job Stability	Participation in Subsistence Activities
Part-time Work	Job Benefits	
Occupation	Income Sources	
Industry	Socio-economic Status (e.g., Blishen-McRoberts Index)	
Income		

* Government programs, band administration or private enterprise.

2.2 Individual Characteristics

Theory as well as empirical research suggests that employment and labour force activity are patterned over various demographic and socio-economic groups. Orthodox economic and human capital theory emphasizes variables such as age, gender, family structure, education levels, training and work experience. Sociological theories of status attainment add family background with characteristics such as father's occupation, migration patterns, and ethnicity, as well as attitudinal variables. The role of subsistence activities and the level of the individual's participation in these activities also affect wage work strategies.

Table 4 summarizes some of the characteristics which can be associated with different patterns of attachment to the labour force. Where research is available on the implications of these characteristics for Indian work patterns, this research is summarized.

Table 4: Characteristics Associated With Individual Labour Force Participation Patterns

• Age	• Business Experience
• Gender	• Family Background
• Family Status	• Migration Patterns
• Formal Education Level	• Participation in Subsistence Activities
• Vocational Training	• Culture
• Work Experience	

Age

Several studies show that strong patterns of unemployment and labour force participation exist over age groups, with lower rates of participation and much higher rates of unemployment in the 15-24 year age cohort (Clatworthy, 1981a; Clatworthy and Hull, 1983, Nicholson and Macmillan, 1986: 60). Young Indian adults living on reserves are particularly disadvantaged in the labour force. This age-related pattern of employment reflects trends in broader society (i.e., the increasing difficulty experienced by new entrants to the labour force) although the unemployment rates among young Indians are much higher than that experienced by the general population.

Patterns of labour force participation over age groups may also reflect cultural values and expectations about working patterns for different age groups. Guillemin (1975: 87; 226-228) found that young Indian adults were encouraged to travel and explore, free of family responsibilities. Travelling and visiting may be tolerated more for younger individuals than for older individuals. Denton's (1970) work, however, gives the impression that these expectations apply more to young Indian men than to women. Peters' (1987) study found that Indian households appeared to be more inclined to offer accommodation to younger individuals who were unemployed than to older people. This offer allowed individuals to travel with fewer expenses.

Gender

Wage work is also patterned by gender. Participation rates in urban areas appear to be lower for females than males and unemployment rates are higher (Clatworthy, 1981a; Clatworthy and Hull, 1983). The same patterns appear for Indians living on the reserves (Canada, 1989; Hagey et al., 1989c). Hull (1982) found that sex was more important than educational levels in predicting average incomes, with women, both on and off the reserves, earning lower incomes than men. On the basis of her analysis of 1986 Census data, Gerber (1990: 80) suggests that: "Indian women are particularly disadvantaged with respect to employment and income despite relative proximity to employment centres and

relatively high educational attainment".

There is little material available which deals with sex discrimination in employment on reserves. However, Ryan (1978) suggested that women leave the reserve because their economic needs are given low priority in the reserve community. Nicholson (1987: 123) maintains that:

> It is evident that considerable discrimination on the basis of sex also exists in many aboriginal communities. For example, few women hold positions on band councils or in native organizations, yet in many cases these institutions control economic development resources on reserves. This is true despite the fact that native women in such positions tend to be dynamic, imaginative, and perhaps more conscious of the importance of staying in touch with the "grass roots".

The generality of these attitudes across different cultures and reserves must, however, be questioned. Fiske (1988: 186) found that among the Carrier people in central British Columbia:

> State intervention, combined with capital inflows and development, left salmon, the most valued resource, in the hands of women, and at the same time reduced the resources exploited primarily by men....Appreciation of women who provide well for their families and communities has implications for women as political actors and community leaders. Today, women and men often rationalize female political actions by reference to their abilities as fisherwomen.

Other researchers provide similar examples of women's high socio-economic status in Indian economies (Albers, 1983; Klein, 1980).

Family Status

Family status appears to have several effects on work patterns: parenthood affects men's and women's readiness to engage in wage labour; there may be discrimination associated with some kinds of family status; and there is evidence that certain kinds of family groupings are a prerequisite for participation in particular economic activities.

Researchers have found that definitions of how mothering was to be properly performed had implications for women's readiness to participate in the labour market. Women appear to take primary responsibility for day-to-day child-rearing and for most of the decisions affecting children's well-being (Meadows, 1980; Pierre-Agamaway, 1983: 67). Guillemin (1975: 211-212) indicated that:

> In reality, there still exists a division of labour by which [men] are recognized as the sex with the best and most continuous access to cash wages and [women] are understood as the sex most concerned with children and households.

Meadows (1980) found that Indian women considered mothering to be a full-time occupation, and they expressed fears that wage work, especially full-time work, prevented them from properly performing their mothering role. The few women who had to work to support husband and family were resentful of the time this took away from their children. Hull's (1982) study of almost two hundred women in Winnipeg found that native women considered child-care and family responsibilities to be major factors in their decisions concerning employment and job training. Other studies documented the tension arising between men and women when women were required to find wage work to support an unemployed husband (Cruikshank, 1975: 112-115).

Many Indian women spend a long period of time bearing and rearing children. For example, 1982 data from Regina and Saskatoon show that over seventy percent of Indian women fifteen and over had children living with them. Almost all of these women (96.2 percent) had one or more pre-school or school aged children. By the age of twenty, over half of Indian women in these two cities had children at home, and from the age of twenty-four to the mid-fifties, close to ninety percent of Indian women had children at home. Young children and long periods of child-rearing must present barriers to Indian women's participation in wage employment (Clatworthy, 1981b). The large number of children among Indians living on reserves suggests that women also have heavy child-related responsibilities (Hagey et al., 1989a).

The relationship between labour force participation and family life for men is not dealt with to any extent in the literature. Guillemin (1975) found that because Micmac men worked on the economic fringes of society, it was a real question whether a man, older or younger, could as an individual support a wife and children with wage income over an extended period of time. However, men were expected to help out with household support while they lived with their spouse and children.

It is not clear to what extent values linking gender, family status and wage income apply to reserves as well as cities, or can be generalized across Indian cultures. It is also not clear to what extent eligibility criteria for social assistance on reserves favour single female parents, providing women with children an alternative to dependence on male income. These are questions which require additional research.

There may also be discrimination associated with family status, especially single parenthood. Women from the Tobique reserve in New Brunswick reported that single parents had difficulty obtaining housing and money for housing repairs (Silman, 1986). Falconer (1990: 203-4) also suggests that on some reserves there is a stigma attached to being a single mother. These attitudes could translate into barriers to employment,

particularly where wage jobs are in short supply. There has been no systematic investigation of this issue to date.

Finally, some economic strategies may not be feasible unless undertaken in the context of particular nuclear and extended family groupings. Driben's (1990) study on women in contemporary Northern Ontario Ojibwa society showed that the roles of male and female spouses were essential if hunting units were to be productive and that the economic prospects of the families of two mature Ojibwa women were bleak after their deaths.

Education

Hull's (1986) analysis of educational characteristics of registered Indians in Canada showed that educational attainment is closely related to employment. Higher education is positively related to higher labour force participation and higher rates of employment, and the gap between Indians and non-Indians decreased as education levels increased (Hull, 1986: 114). Armstrong et al. (1990) found that Indians showed greater gains in employment with increasing education levels than non-Indians.

Education levels also affected the amount of time individuals had worked in the previous twelve months. Individuals who had completed high school were most likely to have worked for 40 weeks or more (Hull, 1986: 120). Although there was a positive relationship between education and weeks worked for Indians on reserves, they were likely to work for fewer weeks in total than Indians living off the reserve. Educational attainment was also closely related to income levels, with higher levels of education associated with higher average incomes for Indians on and off reserves. The key level at which incomes rose was the post secondary level.

The link between education levels and employment characteristics must, however, be treated with some caution. Nicholson and Macmillan's (1986: 179) analysis of 1981 Census data indicates that: "the lower levels of educational attainment among Indian people do not provide a complete explanation of their lower levels of employment". Other factors must also be important, including more limited access to local employment, discrimination, lack of experience and the nature of cultural attitudes toward formal wage work.

Vocational Training

The effect of vocational training on labour force attachment is not clear. Vocational training has been an important part of programs to improve Indians' socio-economic status (Hull, 1986). However, Wien's (1986: 100) research on the Micmac found that vocational training had no impact on subsequent employment, a finding which is consistent with the dual economy thesis. Driben and Trudeau (1983) found that training

programs were seen as a way of gaining an income which allowed individuals to remain in the reserve community. Given these objectives, the lack of a relationship between training and employment is not surprising. However, there is little evidence about whether this pattern is general among Indians on reserve, and this relationship requires further investigation.

Work Experience

While orthodox economic theory posits a positive relationship between work experience and socio-economic mobility, the dual economy theory suggests that individuals who begin work in secondary jobs find it very difficult to move into primary jobs. There is relatively little work on the relationship between work experience and occupational mobility for Indians on reserves. Clatworthy (1981a: 54) found no significant increase in occupational status for Winnipeg Indians with increasing years in the labour force, and most analyses of Indian labour force participation indicate that Indians are over-represented in low status occupations. This relationship remains to be more fully explored.

Business Experience

Business experience is different from work experience. It refers to the set of skills required to set up and manage a small or medium business operation. Researchers have indicated how few businesses operate in the Indian compared to the overall Canadian economy. The 1985 Task Force on Indian Economic Development (Canada, 1985: 18) reported that only about 20 percent of jobs in the Indian economy are in small businesses compared to 80 percent for all Canadians, and about 5 percent are in medium and large businesses compared to about 10 percent for all Canadians.

Nicholson's (1987) report for the Ontario Native Affairs Directorate outlined several ways in which lack of business experience put Indians at a disadvantage. He indicated that there was a lack of sophisticated professional skills, training or business experience to start, manage and operate a business. There was poor institutional and informal networking where Indians' lack of business experience often stood in the way of access to investment or operating capital, and often prohibited non-native business people from getting involved in joint business ventures (1987: 111-123).

The assumption of Nicholson and others (e.g., Robinson, 1981) that Indian people on reserves are not engaged in business enterprises other than those initiated by band governments has recently been challenged by researchers documenting the existence of micro-enterprises in various communities (Sherman, 1988; Wolfe et al., 1989). A study of a southern Ontario reserve by Wolfe et al. (1989: 19) indicated that:

> Anyone who has spent some time on a Canadian Indian reserve knows that micro-enterprises are operating. They are not labelled or advertised. They do not have to be. People in the community know well enough where to find the auto mechanic, the people who make crafts, sell small quantities of goods, run a taxi service, or, where the bootleggers can be found. But they are not easily recognized or found by outsiders....Local people use them constantly, and participate routinely in the hidden economy but are unconscious of their strengths and importance.

The relationship between business experience and employment or self-employment is not easy to measure. In the first place, it is not clear to what extent micro-enterprises can provide individuals with the kinds of business skills Nicholson considers important. Second, it is very difficult to find data to measure "business experience", especially experience in the informal economy. Nevertheless, these studies suggest that the "lack of business experience" argument must be carefully evaluated.

Family Background

Hull's (1986: 53-64) study found that the parents' low socio-economic status and income had negative effects on children's educational attainment. These effects appear to be more pronounced among Indians than non-Indians. On-reserve residence also discouraged educational attainment. Children in native families with parents who are not in the experienced labour force appear to have less than a 40 percent probability of completing high school. These results have important implications for inter-generational mobility, since educational attainment is positively correlated with income levels, and a high school education is one of the strongest predictors of Indian employment (Hull, 1986).

Other aspects of the effect of family background remain to be explored. Mooney's (1976) study of urban Indians in British Columbia indicated there is no evidence of inter-generational mobility, and concluded that this finding supported the dependency model of Indian's socio-economic position in non-Indian society. The effect of parents' occupations, migration patterns, income, and work patterns on children's labour force attachment should be examined.

Migration Patterns

Despite the general perception of Indians as highly mobile, Siggner (1977) found that fewer Indians than non-Indians were migrants between 1966 and 1971, according to Census definitions. Nicholson and Macmillan (1986: 15) concluded, on the basis of 1981

Census data which showed that two thirds of on-reserve Indians were "non-movers", that: "This high degree of non-mobility indicates a general lack of flexibility to respond to more favourable employment opportunities in other locations". Other researchers similarly observed an unwillingness on the part of reserve residents to move out of their community (Driben and Trudeau, 1983; Lithman, 1984). Migrant status, while it is an imperfect measure, may identify individuals who are more flexible in their choice of residence, or who are less attached to the reserve community and more prepared to look for employment elsewhere.

Participation in Subsistence Activities

The relationship between wage work and traditional hunting activities, and wage income and the utilization of country food is not simple. It seems logical that cash income would allow families to substitute purchased food for country food with the result that increasing participation in the wage labour force would result in less hunting and fishing. Research in several northern communities suggests that this relationship does not hold for various reasons.

First, the high cost of store-bought food in the North and its frequently inferior quality mean that wage incomes need to be substantial for families to be equally well-off without country food. In their study of the James Bay Cree, Elberg et al. (1975: 72) note that giving up participation in the subsistence economy means that northern people are dependent on wage labour and commercial food and have no leverage to keep prices down or to maintain fair wage levels. However, cash income increases efficiency in country food production by making better hunting equipment and more frequent expeditions to remote and less utilized areas affordable. In addition, hunters with high incomes can choose to hunt only in peak periods of the game cycle when returns are highest. Hedican (1986: 76) notes that:

> Those who have difficulty securing wage employment are doomed to a double dilemma - they have to hunt and fish when a return on their effort is uncertain, and yet they do not have the cash for expenditures on capital equipment, maintenance, and transportation costs to increase subsistence production.

Finally, while the most effective strategy would be to hunt during peak periods and to work during periods when the highest paid employment is available, these two periods often overlap (Hedican, 1986: 76). As a result, northern Indians face a complex juggling act in their attempts to maximize their <u>real</u> compared to their apparent income.

The availability of country food, then, has implications for the ways individuals evaluate the advantages of part-time versus full-time work. Wage levels have to be seen in the

context of hunting strategies, and the timing of employment opportunities affect individuals' willingness to take them up. These relationships are complex and need to be carefully analyzed.

Culture

The relationship between cultural values and patterns of labour force participation is also complex. A number of case studies suggest that these relationships vary among different Indian cultures. Van Horn (1983) found that among the Micmac, the basic economic unit for sharing resources and performing work is the patrilocal family. Attempts to motivate students or workers through individual competition, the cultural approach of non-Indians, was not very effective. He (1983: 105) indicates:

> Work is done for the group. Identity is found in competing along with and for a group rather than individually, a situation which is consistent with Micmac egalitarian values. If economic self-sufficiency for Micmac communities means that new work projects with increased productivity must be brought to the reserve, then the way to promote productivity is via group competition on the reserve.

In contrast, Usher (1971) emphasized the individuality and independence of work and subsistence activities undertaken by the Bankslanders.

Freilich (1958) argued that the reason the majority of Mohawk men found their niche in the structural steel industry is that it enabled them to duplicate closely their pre-reservation period social structure. Hedican's (1986: 51-54) study of an Ojibwa community found that despite approximately two centuries of participation in the wage labour market, aspects of traditional thinking regarding the mobilization of labour were still prevalent, and that this thinking affected participation patterns. Historically, the Ojibwa valued a system of reciprocal exchange and did not consider the exchange of labour for money a satisfactory arrangement because it meant that workers were not partners in joint labour exchanges, but "slaves". Hedican found that:

> In Collins, the idea that one "hires someone to do something" is not indigenously recognized as a work-concept. A task is accomplished, not by "hiring someone," but by exchanging your future labour for someone's immediate services. The second major form of labour mobilization does not involve an exchange of labour as such, but involves an exchange of goods and/or services in return for "professional" knowledge or skill.

These vignettes are not directly comparable, and indeed, there does not appear to be any research which compares attitudes toward wage and other work among Indians from different cultural origins. Case studies do, however, indicate that cultural values can affect labour force participation, and that the relationship between the two should be explored.

2.3 Contextual Factors

It is misleading to examine the characteristics of individual Indians in relation to their work patterns without taking account of the nature of the reserve economy and opportunities in the local area. Full-time employment on a reserve where there are virtually no full-time jobs means something quite different from full-time employment on a wealthy and extensively economically developed reserve. Chances to participate in the labour force outside the reserve also vary. The result is that there may be different relationships between individual characteristics and work patterns depending on the nature of the reserve and local economy.

Reserve Characteristics

There are a number of factors which need to be considered in creating a typology of reserves with different labour force structures and opportunities. These include: i) size of the reserve population and the number of employment opportunities in relation to the reserve labour force; ii) the type and combination of opportunities; iii) community attitudes toward and support for participation in the wage labour force; and iv) community interpretations of characteristics or qualifications which make individuals eligible for different positions.

Table 5: Registered Indian Bands by Population On-Reserve

Band Population Size	Number of Bands	Percent of Bands
0 on reserve	17	2.8
1 - 99	126	21.0
100 - 249	145	24.1
250 - 499	147	24.5
500 - 999	103	17.1
1000 - 1999	41	6.8
2000 +	22	3.7
Total	601	

Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Indian Register, 1990.
Note: On-reserve includes on-reserve (own band) populations and on Crown land (own band) populations.

Although there are some exceptions (Peters, 1989), bands constitute the primary unit of organization of the Indian population for planning and delivering socio-economic development programs and services. The typical Indian band has a relatively small population living on the reserve. In 1990, 72.4 percent of bands had fewer than 500 people living on the reserve and 89.5 percent had fewer than 1000 on-reserve residents (Table 5). The small size of the individual reserve population base seriously limits the number of bands which can sustain industrial and commercial ventures on their own, and has implications for the degree to which the band population can depend on band-centred employment initiatives versus the extent to which the mainstream economy provides the main source of employment opportunities.

The nature of the reserve economy has a major impact on the structure of reserve labour force opportunities and on the kinds of skills or "human capital" which are valued. Dimensions of variation include the type of economic base, the degree of economic development and the degree to which bands have developed structures and institutions to meet the social and economic needs of members. Reserves in Canada demonstrate considerable variation in this respect (Table 6) (See also MacLachlan, 1986; Nicholson and Macmillan, 1986).

Table 6: Examples of Reserve Economies

• Little economic development, low degree of institutional development (Driben and Trudeau, 1983; Shkilnyk, 1985).
• Little economic development, high degree of institutional development (Ponting, 1986).
• Highly developed subsistence economy; high degree of institutional development; some manufacturing and crafts enterprises (Salisbury, 1986.
• High degree of economic development in resource extraction; high degree of institutional development (Mackie, 1986).
• High degree of economic development in commercial (tourist) ventures; high degree of institutional development (Etkin, 1988).

For example, the two groups with negotiated self-government agreements have very different emphases in managing their economies, with the Cree insisting that their strategies of economic development support and protect traditional hunting activities, and the Sechelt involved in tourism and marina and condominium development (Etkin, 1988; Feit, 1980; LaRusic, 1979; Taylor, 1989).

Economic development is not the only source of employment opportunities on reserves. Ponting's (1986) study of the Kahnawake reserve showed that the expansion of institutions occurred largely in the absence of major economic development. Gerber's

(1977; 1984) studies demonstrated wide variation in the number and range of band institutions and organizations on reserves. Differences in the type of economic enterprise and level of economic and institutional development mean that the availability of jobs and the kinds of skill required to fill them vary widely between reserves.

Hedican's (1986: 56) model of the changing work force in Collins Ontario may be adapted to create a typology of reserve opportunities. It shows that over time, trapping and subsistence-related activities are declining most rapidly on reserves, followed by seasonal wage work such as guiding. Much more slowly, full-time employment in manual sectors of the economy (e.g., railway work) grew, but in the past 20 years this form of employment opportunity has become static. Finally, specialized employment (e.g., business, administrative work) has only been growing since the 1960s, but its pace has been slowest of all. The result is that with the rapid decline of trapping and subsistence-related activities and seasonal wage work, and the static trend in full-time manual employment and slow growth in specialized employment, there are fewer employment opportunities now then ever before.

Bands and reserves may also vary in attitudes toward entrepreneurship and employment. Driben and Trudeau's (1983: 10) indictment of federally funded economic development programs for the Fort Hope band in Northern Ontario indicates:

> [T]he band's current economic dilemma is rooted in the zeal that characterized the way government agencies promoted their White Paper initiatives in the band and in the paternalistic methods they used to deliver their programs....The outcome was that band members were rewarded for becoming dependent, stymied in their attempts to become independent, and left in a position where vulnerability to government cut-backs is now the one overriding feature of their lives.

Ponting's (1986: 155-156) study of the Kahnawake reserve pointed out how important it is for a band council to create an atmosphere of self-help and community responsibility to counteract dependency historically created by DIAND policies. Bands which have suffered major economic and cultural upheavals because of forced relocation may not provide a climate which encourages stable labour force participation (Fry, 1974; Matthiasson et al, 1983; Shkilnyk, 1985).

Bands may also vary in how they define job qualifications. Some Indian organizations insist that economic development must not take place to the detriment of Indian culture and its base in the nature of the Indian community and the natural environment. Loubser's (1980: 21) summary of the 1977 National Indian Brotherhood's A Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of Indian People indicates:

> The central thrust of The Strategy is that Indian society should be strengthened through the development of Indian economies within Indian cultural frameworks under the control of Indian political institutions anchored in and drawing their legitimacy from local Indian communities. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of social reality and insists that the holistic principle that politics, economics, culture and other sectors not be treated as disconnected things but as parts of a whole, should guide all further development of the Indian people, as well as the reform of existing government agencies and programmes relating to them.

Cornell and Kalt (1990: 104) point out that for many American Indian tribes, non-economic goals of political and social sovereignty are as important as economic goals with respect to development (See also Lockhart, 1989; Lockhart and McCaskill, 1986). As a result, employment positions may be assigned according to different criteria than in the non-Indian economy, and may vary for different reserves. Some bands allocate scarce jobs on a family or household basis, which could result in allocating available jobs mainly to male members of the household (Nicholson and Macmillan, 1986: 75). Respect for traditional leadership skills may have the result that individuals are assigned to positions with high socio-economic status even though they do not have "human capital" measured by years of formal education.

Where consensual decision-making and co-operative enterprises are favoured, individual attributes may be largely irrelevant to formal measures of employment or reserve labour force participation (Cornell and Kalt, 1990; Deloria, 1978). This dimension may be difficult to measure, but an attempt should be made to explore its significance.

Local Economies

Mackie (1986: 212) points out that economic development on individual reserves does not occur in a vacuum. The number and type of employment opportunities available to Indians living on reserves is affected by local economic conditions. Elements which seem to be important include: i) degree of geographic isolation from local employment opportunities and markets; ii) nature of the local economic base; iii) degree of discrimination; and iv) provincial policies regarding Indian employment and economic development.

In 1987 more than one third (39.0 percent) of Indians on reserves lived in rural areas, 5.4 percent lived in remote areas, and 18.8 percent lived in communities without year-round road access to the nearest service centre (Canada, 1989: 15). In some rural areas and in most small northern communities, the lack of locally available jobs is a serious barrier for Indian workers. There are simply not enough local jobs to meet the labour supply,

and even if all local jobs were filled by Indian workers, unemployment rates would remain very high. For example, a study cited by Hilderman, Feir and Witty (1978: 16) identified only 158 full-time jobs at Cross Lake, Manitoba, compared to an on-reserve labour force of 377. An additional 366 jobs were temporary or seasonal. Another community planning study for Split Lake, Manitoba found there were 35 full-time jobs in 1976 compared to a labour force of 164 (Hilderman, Feir and Witty, 1978: 16).

Access to employment opportunities is further constricted by the fact that hiring is done in some trades through hiring halls which are located in urban centres even though the jobs are located in remote areas. This makes it difficult for local workers to apply, even if they have obtained the required certification (Hull, 1984: 14). Several studies, however, have suggested that access and isolation do not affect wage levels (Bone and Green, 1986; Armstrong, 1989). This result needs to be more fully explored.

The size of the local population also affects the kinds of economic development which can occur, and as a result, the kind of jobs available. A prerequisite of shopping centre development, for example, is a large population of Indians and non-Indians. Small business creation and individual entrepreneurship has been most successful in or near large urban areas (Mackie, 1986: 211-226).

Besides the size of the local population, the nature of the local economy must be taken into account. Different sectors of the economy offer different types of jobs and there may be different propensities to hire Indian labour. They also have varying bust and boom cycles. The nature of the local economy affects labour force participation of Indians on reserves in three ways. It affects off-reserve work opportunities, it affects the kinds of small businesses local Indian entrepreneurs can offer (e.g., transportation companies in areas of mining and hydro-electric development), and it affects the spending power of Indians and non-Indians who create a market for local Indian entrepreneurs.

There is some evidence in the literature that levels of discrimination may vary from place to place as well, and these levels may affect off-reserve employment opportunities. Gibbins and Ponting's (1978) study identified varying levels of prejudice against Indian people in different provinces. A number of studies indicate that Indians experience particularly intense prejudice and hostility in small towns and communities, particularly those near Indian reserves (Braroe, 1975; Brody, 1983; Shimpo, 1965; Stymeist, 1975). In larger communities, there is still discrimination, but levels of hostility do not appear to be as high.

Finally, provincial policies and programs may result in variations in opportunities for Indian participation in the wage labour force. Different provinces have different programs for employment equity and regional development, they have negotiated different cost-sharing agreements with the federal government for services to Indians, and they demonstrate different attitudes toward their Indian populations (Abele and Graham, 1989; Breton and Grant, 1984). Provincial variations should be taken into account.

The theory about Indian labour force participation is neither very well researched nor developed. The variables, patterns and relationships summarized in the preceding pages must therefore be taken as general guidelines for further exploration. Additional relationships may result from empirical analysis and attempts to model Indian attachment to the labour force.

CONCLUSION

There are many gaps and contradictions in the literature on Indians' attachment to the labour force. Past assumptions about the nature of Indian work and culture may have provided a climate which discouraged this type of research. Weaver's (1990: 12) analysis of Canadian Indian policy identifies an historic paradigm which assumed that First Nations cultures would inevitably disappear with forces of acculturation. The question of how Indian individuals and communities survived economically would not be a crucial research question under this paradigm since strategies which involved subsistence economies or otherwise flowed from Indian cultural values would be labelled at best transitional, if not backward or dysfunctional. Weaver suggests that a new paradigm is only now emerging which recognizes that Indian cultures are dynamic and can adopt elements of other cultures without losing their integrity or legitimacy.

Material on this topic may also be scarce because the low levels of Indian participation in the labour force are as much due to structural constraints as to individual attributes. It is clear that the economic well-being of individual Indians is strongly related to the opportunities available on reserves, and more research is available on reserve economies and economic development than on individuals' strategies and characteristics.

In this context, it seems premature to specify a model of Indian labour force attachment. What is required instead, is an exploration of what patterns exist and how they are related to individual attributes and reserve and local economies. This report provides a basis for this type of research, identifying key variables and issues which need to be taken into account.

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